

## Criteria and Procedures for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award Program: High Schools

### Statutory Authority

§59-18-1100. The State Board of Education, working with the division and the Department of Education, must establish the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement. Awards will be established for schools attaining high levels of absolute performance and for schools attaining high rates of improvement. The award program must be based upon improved performance on longitudinally matched student data and may include such additional criteria as:

- (1) student attendance;
- (2) teacher attendance;
- (3) student dropout rates; and
- (4) any other factors promoting or maintaining high levels of achievement and performance.

Schools shall be rewarded according to specific criteria established by the division. In defining eligibility for a reward for high levels of performance, student performance should exceed expected levels of improvement. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to ensure districts of the State utilize these funds to improve or maintain exceptional performance according to their schools' plans established in Section 59-139-10. Funds may be utilized for professional development support.

Special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provision of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding.

### Criteria and Procedures

**Eligibility:** Schools receiving a high school report card, in accordance with procedures outlined in The Accountability Manual, with student learning achievement outcome data will be eligible for participation in the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program. Special schools for the academically talented are eligible in accordance with the requirements outlined in §59-18-1100. These requirements state that "special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provisions of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding." No application is required.

**Award Criteria:** Two procedures are employed to select schools that meet the criteria for attaining high levels of absolute performance and high rates of improvement. Schools that are selected through one of the two procedures are recognized through the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program.

**Procedure A:** The procedure is a combination of the absolute performance and improvement ratings as prescribed in the *Criteria for School and District Ratings*. The improvement rating used for selection of award recipient schools includes an adjustment for gap reduction. To qualify for a Gold or Silver award, a school's absolute performance rating must be above unsatisfactory. Schools will receive a Gold or a Silver award when one of the following three conditions occurs:

- (1) A school with an excellent rating in absolute performance will receive Gold award for high levels of academic performance as long as its improvement rating is equal to or above average;
- (2) A school with an excellent rating in improvement will receive a Gold award for high levels of improvement as long as its absolute performance rating is above unsatisfactory; or

- (3) A school with a good rating in improvement will receive a Silver award for good improvement results as long as its absolute rating is above unsatisfactory.

The following figure outlines the ratings blend for the awards:

Absolute Performance Rating	Improvement Rating	Award Designation
Excellent	Excellent	Gold
Excellent	Good	Gold
Excellent	Average	Gold
Good	Excellent	Gold
Good	Good	Silver
Average	Excellent	Gold
Average	Good	Silver
Below Average	Excellent	Gold
Below Average	Good	Silver

Procedure B: This is based upon steady growth demonstrated over a minimum of two consecutive years. A school may qualify for a Silver award if the school's absolute performance rating is above unsatisfactory for the most recent year, and (1) its improvement index is 0.20 or greater for two consecutive years, or (2) its improvement index is 0.10 or greater for three consecutive years.

The 2000-2001 school year is set as the base year.

Procedure for Special High Schools for the Academically Talented: A special school for the academically talented is a district-operated school that has at least 50 percent of its enrollment of students based upon predicted or realized high achievement from across multiple school attendance zones.

Special schools for academically talented will qualify to receive a Gold award when one of the following two conditions occurs:

- (1) A school with an excellent rating in absolute performance for three consecutive years starting in the school year 2000-2001 will receive a Gold award for attaining high levels of academic performance; or
- (2) A school with a good or excellent rating in absolute performance for three consecutive years and an absolute performance index value of 4.5 for the most recent year will receive a Gold award for attaining high levels of achievement.

#### Allocation of Funds and Non-Achievement Criteria

School financial awards shall be calculated on a per pupil basis in accordance with the particular criteria met. A school qualifying for a financial award will receive 80% of the per pupil allocation, plus up to an additional 20% based on the following criteria:

- a. student attendance, criterion set at a minimum of 97%,
- b. teacher attendance, criterion set at a minimum of 97%,
- c. dropout rate, grades 9-12, criterion set at a maximum of 2.5%.

Schools qualifying for a Silver award will receive two-thirds the per pupil allocation of schools receiving a gold award.

### Acknowledgement

The Education Oversight Committee expresses appreciation to the following educators who served on the Advisory Group:

Dr. Douglas Alexander  
Director of Research and Evaluation  
Richland County School District One

Mr. Jeff Radnor  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Anderson County School District Four

Dr. Janelle Rivers  
Coordinator of Testing and Evaluation  
Lexington County School District One

Mr. John Robinson  
Legislative Consultant  
South Carolina Association of School Administrators

Dr. John Segars  
Director of Testing and Information Technology  
Darlington County School District

Dr. John Suber  
Education Associate  
Office of School Quality  
SC State Department of Education

Mr. Pin Pin Tee  
Consultant, Technical Support  
Charleston School District

Mrs. Missy Wall-Mitchell  
Director of Planning and Evaluation  
Georgetown County School District and  
SC State Department of Education

## Appendix A

## Report on Simulation: Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program for High Schools

Two procedures will be used to identify high schools with high levels of absolute performance and high rates of improvement. Procedure A is based on Absolute and Improvement Ratings. Procedure B recognizes schools for sustained improvement.

Procedure A: The Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards recognize schools that attain high levels of absolute performance and high rates of improvement. Like the criteria for schools enrolling students in grades 3-8, the rate of academic improvement for schools is an essential and crucial consideration in the criteria for high schools. The procedure is a combination of the absolute performance and improvement ratings as prescribed in the *Criteria for School and District Ratings*. The improvement rating includes the adjustment for gap reduction.

To qualify for a Gold or Silver award, a school's absolute performance rating must be above unsatisfactory. Schools will receive a Gold or a Silver award when one of the following three conditions occurs:

- (1) Schools with an Excellent rating in absolute performance will receive Gold award for high levels of academic performance as long as its improvement rating is equal to or above Average;
- (2) Schools with an Excellent rating in improvement will receive a Gold award for high level of improvement as long as its absolute performance rating is above Unsatisfactory; or
- (3) Schools with a Good rating in improvement will receive a Silver award for good improvement results as long as its absolute rating is above Unsatisfactory.

Figure 1 below shows the selection procedure proposed:

Figure 1  
Primary Procedure Based on Ratings

Absolute Performance Rating	Improvement Rating	Award Designation
5 Excellent	5 Excellent	Gold
Excellent	4 Good	Gold
5 Excellent	3 Average	Gold
4 Good	5 Excellent	Gold
4 Good	4 Good	Silver
3 Average	5 Excellent	Gold
3 Average	4 Good	Silver
2 Below Average	5 Excellent	Gold
2 Below Average	4 Good	Silver

The following frequency table shows the distribution of the absolute performance and improvement ratings for the 186 high schools for the school year of 2000-2001. The data were provided by the Office of Research, South Carolina Department of Education, 2001.

Figure 2

Frequency Distribution of Performance and Improvement Ratings 2000-2001 (high schools only)						
Performance Rating	Improvement Rating					
Frequency	Unsatisfactory	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent	Total
Unsatisfactory	11	8	1	1	11	32
Below Average	5	3	2	2	5	17
Average	6	3	2	3	7	21
Good	10	34	0	13	20	77
Excellent	0	0	0	16	23	39
Total	32	48	5	35	66	186

#### Selection Results from Procedure A Based on Ratings

Based on Procedure A above, 89 high schools were selected to receive a Gold (71 schools) or a silver (18 schools) award. The following tables present the distribution of award recipient schools by school location, by range of percent of students participating in the free/reduced price meal program.

Table A shows recipient schools by location. About 35 percent (38 out of 109) of the rural high schools would receive either a gold or silver award, 48 percent (19 out of 40) suburban schools would receive either a gold or a silver award, and about half of (20 out of 37) the urban schools would receive either a gold or a silver award.

Figure 3  
Distribution of High School Award Recipients by Location

School Location		Number of schools receiving Gold Award	Number of schools receiving Silver Award	Total Number of schools receiving awards
Location	Total School			
Rural	109	38	12	50
Suburban	40	15	4	19
Urban	37	18	2	20
Total	186	71	18	89

As shown in Figure 4, about 33 percent (27 out of 81) of the schools with more than half of their students participating in the free/reduced price meal program would receive either a silver or a gold award. The distribution across meal range is reasonably even, considering that about 90 schools rated as unsatisfactory in absolute performance were excluded from the selection. Those schools were mostly rural or urban schools with a large proportion of their students on the free/reduced price meal program.

Figure 4  
Distribution of Award Recipients across Poverty Index Range

Schools with students on free/reduced meal Percent      Number		Number of schools receiving      Gold Award	Number of schools receiving      Silver Award	Total
0-10 %	1	1	0	1
11-20 %	12	8	0	8
21-30 %	28	14	3	17
31-40 %	35	15	5	20
41-50 %	28	10	4	14
51-60 %	30	7	4	11
61-70 %	16	8	1	9
71-80 %	17	4	1	5
81-90 %	12	2	0	2
90 + %	6	0	0	0
Total		71	18	89

#### Special Schools for the Academically Talented

As outlined in the Education Accountability Act of 1998 "special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provision of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding" (§59-18-1100). A special school for the academically talented is a district-operated school that enrolls students based upon predicted or realized high achievement from across multiple school attendance zones.

Special schools for academically talented will qualify to receive a Gold award when one of the two following conditions occurs: (1) A school with an excellent rating in absolute performance for three consecutive years starting in the school year 2000-2001 will receive a Gold award for attaining high levels of academic performance or (2) A school with an excellent rating in absolute performance for three consecutive years and an absolute performance index value of 4.5 or higher for the most recent year will receive a Gold award for attaining high levels of achievement.

#### Non-Achievement Criteria

Non-achievement criteria will not be used in qualifying schools for award. However, the non-achievement criteria such as student attendance, teacher attendance, and dropout rates will be used in the calculation for the amount of awarding money that a recipient school will receive. A school qualifying for an award will receive 80% of the per pupil allocation, plus up to an additional 20% based on the following non-achievement criteria:

- a. student attendance, criterion set at a minimum of 97%,
- b. teacher attendance, criterion set at a minimum of 97%,
- c. dropout rate, grades 9-12, criterion set at a maximum of 2.5%.